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SUPPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS BY NEW TYPE REGIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES.

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PUB DATE 23 OCT 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.28 5P.

DESCRIPTORS- ADMINISTRATION, COOPERATIVE EDUCATION, *COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS, COOPERATING TEACHERS, DATA PROCESSING, INSERVICE PROGRAMS, *RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS, REGIONAL COOPERATION, REGIONAL PROGRAMS, RURAL AREAS, *SERVICES, SPECIAL EDUCATION, SMALL SCHOOLS, STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, TEACHERS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, INTERMEDIATE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT, BOCES,

THE INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT, ESTABLISHED BY LAW IN NEW YORK STATE IN 1948, IS A COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL VENTURE PROVIDING SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS WITH SERVICES WHICH ARE NOT USUALLY POSSIBLE, DUE TO THE SIZE AND ISOLATION OF THESE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. SEVERAL OF THESE INTERMEDIATE DISTRICTS, LABELED BOCES (BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES), HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN NEW YORK STATE. ONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS, ONTARIO-SENECA-YATE BOCES, ENCOMPASSES THREE COUNTIES, WAS CHARTERED IN 1954, AND IS COMPOSED OF 16 SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHICH ENROLL BETWEEN 25,000 AND 30,000 PUPILS. AS A RESULT OF THIS COOPERATION, THESE SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE NOW PROVIDED ADDITIONAL SERVICES WHICH CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SIX CATEGORIES--INTINERANT TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D.C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (ES)

ED016550

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Speech presented at
NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE
ON RURAL YOUTH
October 23-26, 1967
Washington, D. C.

Special Session on Education
and Training of Rural Youth

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SUPPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS BY NEW TYPE REGIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

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It is a pleasure to talk with you this afternoon about BOCES. BOCES -- B - O - C - E - S -- that is vernacular in New York State for an intermediate district. The letters BOCES stand for Board of Cooperative Educational Services but when you add the rest of the title, in my case, "Of the Sole Supervisory District of Ontario-Seneca- Yates Counties," it becomes a mouthful that bothers even the professional jargon manipulators. Consequently, my job is with the Ontario-Seneca-Yates BOCES.

As many of you know, we have a new BOCES law in New York State. It is a great step forward but it's like walking in new shoes. You know new shoes are stiff. They're untried and occasionally they pinch in the old familiar places. But I would be most unfair, if I did not say that we are thrilled to get this new law. Honestly, we're just like a kid with a first new pair of shoes.

BOCES is not new in New York State. It got its start in 1948. Somebody convinced the legislature that the intermediate district law they were about to pass would be difficult, if not impossible to implement. He suggested that they better make a little simpler procedure so that somebody would use the new law. The legislature did just this with the enactment of Section 1958. Since then, BOCES has grown like topsy. The reason for this growth was very simple. BOCES provided services which the schools needed. BOCES has grown in two ways--in the size of the area and numbers served, and in the kinds of services provided.

Perhaps I can illustrate the two-way trend of BOCES growth by describing a little of the history and geography of the one I serve. The Ontario-Seneca-Yates BOCES started in September, 1954, with one employee serving two schools of those in an area composed of four townships in part of one county. Today the Ontario-Seneca-Yates BOCES serves 16 schools in 36 towns and two cities located in three counties. You can drive between 65 and 70 miles to go from one end to the other. Those 16 schools enroll between 25,000 and 30,000 students. The smallest school has two teachers with 48 pupils and the largest is a large central school with an enrollment of about 3600. This district is larger than either of the cities.

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John E. Loveless

Incidentally we will spend almost a million dollars of the taxpayers money this year in providing about 25 different services to the schools by means of about 50 professional and 20 non-professional employees.

Now to bring this into the proper perspective, let me say that these 16 schools purchase these services from us. We have to provide this service in a better and/or cheaper way than they can provide it or they don't buy it from us. So, BOCES has grown because we can and do provide something these districts want and at a price they can afford. It should be pointed out that the two cities and three of the large districts joined BOCES of their own volition. They joined because they wanted the services BOCES could provide.

May I repeat--all these schools buy the service from us. They sign a contract for the service and pay the full cost of the service. Every cent we spend on services comes directly from the local school district. They receive a state aid allotment on the amount they pay us. This aid is paid to BOCES and once a year BOCES sends a check to the school for the full amount--100% of it. Some BOCES in New York State reduce the amount of the contract of the local district by the amount of state aid that is due the local district but this is a little more involved with bookkeeping.

These services could roughly be divided into six categories--itinerant teachers, administrative services, occupational services, special education, pupil personnel services and the ever-present miscellaneous.

Itinerant teachers were the first service we offered. The very first service was a teacher of driver education shared between Clifton Springs and Red Jacket central schools. I am happy to say that while many teachers have come and gone, Mr. Geise still works for us some 14 years after he started. Other shared teachers today include music, art, reading specialists, and business teachers. I might say that as the schools we serve become larger, the shared teachers decrease. However, even our largest school--the one with 3600 pupils--still uses shared teachers. I might add that the larger the schools become, the more services they use. This is universally true in New York State. The largest BOCES in New York State are in Erie County around Buffalo and in Westchester and Suffolk Counties outside New York City. Here the schools are large and are better able to take advantage of the services BOCES can provide.

One of our largest services from point of view of participation and dollar volume is in the area of administration. It is data processing. All 16 schools participate to varying degrees. We do census, attendance, high school scheduling, test scoring, report cards, payrolls, and accounting. Beside these, there are innumerable small jobs. For one school, we provided bus lists based on residence. For another, all the boys of Boy Scout age in their district. For another, a real quickie - the indicated kindergarten enrollment for September 1, 1968, when the principal wanted it for a board meeting that night. The real beauty of this service is

the flexibility provided. A school is not straight-jacketed because of participation. For instance, they can have report cards in letters or numbers and at any intervals they wish. We have one school taking report cards on six, seven and eight weeks each semester. This service is probably not less expensive to the schools but it is much better.

There are two phases of this program which are a kind of bonus.

First, since we have the necessary hardware, we have entered into a contract with the Genesee School Development Association to produce experimentally materials for computer-assisted instruction. This program is financed under a grant from Title III of E.S.E.A. We are producing experimental material for general science, French, English, first grade and junior high school math. As soon as the material is ready, we try it out on some pupils. Late this year, we hope to move a console into one of the schools for a real test run.

Second, we occasionally bring in high school classes and our director gives them instruction in how mechanized data processing operates. We find that the students pick it up very readily.

Our biggest and most expensive service is our occupational school. This school provides instruction in practical nursing, child care, electronics, cosmetology, appliance repair, drafting, secretarial, automechanics, small engine repair, carpentry, agriculture, welding and machine shop. Seniors attend in the morning and juniors in the afternoon. They get their basic English, social studies and math and/or science in their own school. We are now in our second year of operation with an enrollment of 350. We presently operate in rented quarters but as I will explain later, we hope to build a real occupational high school soon. The Federal Government put some money in this to get it started. (Federal Government money purchased the equipment for these courses.) Now the entire cost is borne by the local district with the help of the state aid. We believe we are training some tradesmen who will find ready employment and will be very useful to society.

In the field of special education, we provide three classes for trainable children, grouped by ages. Trainable children are defined as children with I.Q.'s below 50. We also provide three classes for educable children with I.Q.'s between 50 and 75. Many of the larger schools provide like classes. Perhaps we could include in our services to the handicapped children the services of psychologists, speech therapists, tutor for the emotionally-disturbed.

At the opposite end of the scale, we provide a program for gifted children which we call the Hobart Program. Here high ability children in their junior or senior year go to Hobart College once a week for eight weeks and take a subject for the eight classes such as psychology, drama, logic, physics, great books, French literature, etc. The students are

taught by college professors exactly as the college professor would teach a college freshman class. They are subject to assignments and tests, but they are never told how they did except that a very few are singled out at the end of the course for outstanding work. This course is offered once before Christmas and once after Christmas. Thus a gifted student can try four different subjects on the college level. It is one of our most popular offerings. At least three other BOCES join with us in offering this program.

The area of pupil personnel services is a weak area in our BOCES, but certain BOCES in New York State have an extremely strong program here. I can promise that ours will include more than psychological, health, and attendance services and social workers in a few years. One of the big handicaps is finding personnel to do the job.

Under the area of miscellaneous are grouped many services. Our Lincoln Center Program which brings performances from the Lincoln Center, Julliard School of Music and other cultural centers of New York City to our local school auditoriums. Here pupils can see cultural programs first-hand.

Our in-service program for teachers, administrators, and even school board members, is a popular service. A former superintendent who helps coordinate the Federal programs and recruits teachers for all the schools in the area, a film library where some one-third of all the films are out of the library at any one time, and we even furnish a person to help the schools with their problems on negotiations and he is busy right now in New York State.

This new BOCES law which permits building sets up an interesting procedure. The BOCES board engages an architect, gets an o.k. from the State Education Department for a building program. The architect designs buildings which will receive the o.k. from the State Education Department and the New York State Dormitory Authority. The building is then put to a vote in each of the local districts that is a member of the BOCES. If the vote is favorable (by favorable, we mean that the total of all the "yes" votes in the total area exceeds the total of "no" votes), then the Dormitory Authority builds the building and BOCES rents it from them. The rent is primarily the payment of bonds and interest. After a certain number of years, after the bonds are retired, the Dormitory Authority turns the building over to BOCES. If it sounds a little bit complicated, it is, but there are at least four of the buildings in the process of construction in New York State and the law didn't become a law until May 2, 1967.

We in the Ontario-Seneca-Yates BOCES are working to bring a building to vote this coming spring. Wish us luck.

Well, it has been fun helping BOCES to grow with the schools. It has been interesting. It has at times been disappointing. It has at times been mentally bruising. If you think that taxpayers in your district can

be rough, try working with 16 different school superintendents, and their boards, whose schools vary from 700 to 3600 pupils and who are highly competitive with their neighboring superintendent. They can really bounce you around because they know the rules of the trade too. But grow we will.

Our motto has been, "BOCES must provide the service either better or cheaper than the local district or we don't provide it." We will continue this aim and experience has shown we can not only survive but grow in our service to the children of Ontario-Seneca and Yates Counties.